

Habakkuk 2-3

Chapter 2:4

The remainder of chapter 2: God's response to Habakkuk's question:
How could God use a wicked people like the Babylonians to judge his people?

Verse 4: God's answer to Habakkuk

Contrast:

The "proud" —the wrong path...live a crooked life...the way of death

The "Just" —the right path...live by faith...the way of life

Sums up the choices of life in the Old and New Testament

The "pride" of the Chaldean will be his destruction

Verse 5

God now shows the result of the life of the proud who live the wrong way
(like Babylon)

Verse 5
Description of the proud

- “he transgresses by wine”—the beginning of his downfall
- Ancient writers show the Babylonians were addicted to wine
 - Became intoxicated over their victories

Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whosoever is led astray by it is not wise

Wine (intoxication):
Can relate to false ideology/religion

- Revelation 17:2—the wine of Babylon’s immorality
- Physical transgression and spiritual transgression

Daniel 5: 2-31
Circumstances of Babylon’s fall—related to drunken pride

“enlarges his desire as hell” (sheol=the grave)....
“and like death, cannot be satisfied”

- Like the grave—swallows up everyone...and is not satisfied

Proverbs 27:20

“Hell and destruction are never full;
So the eyes of man are never satisfied”

“gathers to himself all nations”... “heaps up for himself all peoples”

- The success while conquering does not satisfy (want more)
 - Greed and aggression

Verse 5

A summary of the Babylonian’s character:

- Pride
- Greed
- Aggression

All of which reflects back to verse 4—the wrong path

Verse 6 (First woe against Babylon)

- Gain at the expense of others

“increases what is not his”

- Property stolen from conquered peoples

“pledges”—wealth they have plundered...by extortion

Last part (TEV) “How long will you go on getting rich by forcing your debtors to pay up?”

Verse 7

The sense is that the Chaldeans had spoiled so much from the nations, that they were indebted **to them**...and would owe them interest

Verse 8

“shall plunder you”—Chaldeans will reap what they have sown

“the plunderer will be plundered”

- Happened when the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon
 - 539 BC

Verse 9—Second Woe: Babylon's greed

“for his house”

Babylon built its empire at the expense of others

“set his nest on high”

Babylon protected itself from attack

(like an eagle's nest)...so that the enemies cannot extract retribution

(paraphrase) “he thinks he can get away with it”

Verse 10

“shameful counsel”... “cutting off many peoples”

➤ Because they plundered many nations

“sinned against your soul”

➤ Caused their own ruin

Verse 11

Various parts of the “house” (conquered people)

Will “cry out” (call for rebellion)...

And many will join in

Verse 12 (Third Woe)—Building empire through bloodshed

- Babylon’s cities built with wealth gained through bloody wars

Verse 13

Babylon’s efforts in vain...God will burn them down

“peoples” and “nations” (captive labor)...who slaved to build Babylon...

Will watch it burn

Rev. 18: 2

v. 8 “she will be utterly burned with fire”

- future

Babylon must be put away for Christ to return

(Rev. 11: 15)

Verse 14 (millennial)

God intends for the earth to be filled with the knowledge of him (Isa. 11:9)

But the religious deception from Babylon must be eliminated

Verse 15 (Fourth Woe) Shameful treatment of other nations

“who gives drink”:

“inhabitants of the earth were made drunk” (Rev. 17: 1-2)

➤ spiritually

“looks upon his nakedness” (Rev.17: 2)

➤ Committed fornication (spiritual)

Verse 16

“filled with shame”

(Rev.17:4)— “filthiness of her fornication”

➤ Babylon will be revealed as ‘uncircumcised’

“you also drink”—will be a new cup for them to drink

(God against them and exposing their shame)

Verse 17

“will cover you”—retribution against Babylon

“Lebanon”—refers to Jerusalem

Verse 17

They cut down forests in their military campaigns and building projects...and killed the
beast living there

“land and the city”—refers to all nations

Verse 18 (Fifth Woe)—Idolatry of Babylon

The worthless idols ..but they have existed throughout the ages

Verse 19

The idol has no life

Verse 20

But in contrast—God is alive in his Holy temple in heaven

God orders everyone to keep silent...for judgment is coming

Zephaniah 1:7 “be silent...for the Day of the Lord is at hand”

Chapter 3

Verse 1

A prayer as in Psalm 7

“Shigionoth”—comes from *Shagah*—to wander...a wandering song
Type of hymn used in temple worship

Verse 2

Habakkuk heard the details of the judgment and he was afraid

Asks God to revive his mighty work of old “in these years” (Tanakh) for Judah...and asks for exercise of mercy in dealing out judgment

“in the midst of years”—(future) could be:

1. The work of Christ’s preaching
2. Revival of the truth and preaching it strongly (ages)
3. Work by the two witnesses...after the work has diminished

“revive”—do works like his interventions for Israel in the past

“in wrath remember mercy”—when punishment comes

Habakkuk is praying that God will do for his people like he has in the past...

And while measuring out punishment **deliver** also

Habakkuk reviews some of God's mighty works of the past (pictures future deliverance using figures from past events)

v.3-7 judgments during the wilderness wanderings

v.8-10 division of Red Sea and Jordan river

v. 11-15 judgment on other nations as he intervened for Israel

v. 3 "**Came** from Teman" (Edomite)—route he will take when he comes back (Feinberg) "Came" should be translated "**comes**"...with a *future* sense

"Paran"= Petra

"covered the heavens...and the earth was filled"—describes the **extent** of his coming

Habakkuk is telling the Jews not to worry that God is on their side and he is coming back

Verse 4

“brightness”—at his coming.... “rays flashing”

- Describe the effects of his coming
His power and strength

Verse 5

“pestilence”—God used to deliver ancient Israel

(Rev. 6) Plagues will precede Christ’s coming

Verse 6

“stood and measured”—God stopped his march to measure the earth

Verse 7

“Cushan”= Ethiopia..... “Midian”=Arabian coast

“trembled”—upon entering Canaan the nations were struck with fear

Verse 8

As God marches forward in judgment the rivers and sea retreat
(as the Red Sea and Jordan River)..Israel passed through dry land

“horses” and “chariots” of salvation
(figurative) God’s use of the elements to save

Verse 9

“bow was made ready”—upon entering Canaan, the nations were struck with fear

God’s “bow”—to accomplish his purpose

“oaths”

(Feinberg) ‘According to God’s solemn oath, he foretold of vengeance upon his enemies’

“the thought is that God’s supernatural interventions are not for one period alone, but his oaths secure them for Israel in the future”

“divided the rivers”

Earth trembles at God’s wrath, water gushes out, and empties out into the rivers
(paraphrase) “springs burst forth at your command”

Verse 10
(Description of God's power)

Roaring of the waters...like a mighty voice

(waves) figurative..."lifted its hands on high" ...at God's command

Verse 11

"sun and moon stood still"—miracle at Gibeon (Joshua 10:12-14)

"arrows"..."spear"—God's judgment

Verse 12

In judgment God marches through the land...nations are trampled
(Chaldeans will be taken down)

Verse 13

"You went forth"—the purpose of God's judgment...the ultimate salvation of his people
(Historically: when the Persians freed the Jews from Babylon)

"your anointed"

1. Israel (my people) (Psalm 105: 15)
2. Messiah—through whom God effects salvation for his people

“house of the wicked” (Chaldeans)...

”laying bare from foundations to neck”
(paraphrase) “laid bare his bones from head to toe”

Verse 14

“thrust through with his own arrows”—God can have them turn on themselves
(Paraphrase) “You destroyed with their own weapons those who came out like a whirlwind, thinking Israel would be an easy prey”

Verse 15 (description of God’s power ends with this verse)

Recalls the Red Sea crossing

Verse 16 (refers back to v.2 ‘your work’)

“when I heard” (the vision of God’s power)...”I trembled”
His homeland will be overrun by the Chaldeans (in judgment)

“rest in the day of trouble”—will take comfort and consolation that this judgment is for
God’s purpose

➤ He **stands firm** in whatever comes (an example of living faith)

➤ An example for us

“invade them with his troops” (of judgment)

Verse 17

(description of hard times)...when the judgment comes

Though the enemy comes and destroys everything in the land...

Verse 18

“rejoice in the Lord” (rise above the trouble)

“joy in the God of my salvation” (hope)
God will be his strength and power

Summary

Habakkuk received the answers to his questions...

He is content with the answers...knowing in faith that God is in control of all

Verse 19

Despite the hour of trial...“God is his strength”
“like deer’s feet”—sure footed, secure

“make me walk on my high hills”—safely through the trying high places...

The man of faith walks on...

Lesson for all of us:

Keep your focus in the difficult times ahead...

Keep your faith in God...

Better days for mankind are coming....